

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 OMB-01 AID-05 A-01 OPR-02

SY-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OC-05 CCO-00

SCCT-01 /096 W

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R 121010Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8696

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 5557

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, BG

SUBJ: TROUBLE IN BANGLADESH: ZIA CALLS FOR UNITY

1. MAJOR GENERAL ZIAUR RHMAN, DEPUTY CHEIF MARTIAL LAW ADMINIS-
TRATOR AND HEAD OF THE BANGLADESH ARMY, SPOKE OVER RADIO BANGLADESH
LATE LAST EVENING (NOVEMBER 11), MAKING A CALL FOR UNITY -- "UNITY
AMONGST THE PEOPLE, UNITY AMONGST THE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES,
AND AMITY BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND THE ADMINISTRATION." HE WARNED
AGAINST "SELF-SEEKING ANTI-NATIONAL FORCES" WHO ARE WORKING TO
UNDERMINE THE MARTIAG LAW ADMINISTRATION, AND SAID THAT THE GOVERN-
MENT IS "COMMITTED" TO ENDING MARTIAL LAW AS SOON AS IT IS NO
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LONGER NEEDED.

2. ZIA EMPHASIZED IN HIS ADDRESS THAT HE IS A SOLDIER, AND NOT A POLITICIAN. HE SAID HE HAD NO CONNECTION WITH THOSE USING HIS NAME IN THEIR PROPAGANDA, AND DESCRIBED THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT AS "COMPLETELY NON-PARTY AND NON-POLITICAL". HE URGED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES TO AVOID POLITICAL ACTIVITIES; "WE ARE NOT POLITICIANS." IN AN IMPLICIT BUT POINTED REFERENCE TO THE JATIYO SAMAJTANTRIK DAL (JSD), ZIA WARNED AGAINST THOSE ENDEAVORING TO DIVIDE THE MILITARY, AND CALLED FOR VIGILANCE BY ALL PEOPLE AND THE ARMED FORCES TO "FOIL THOSE EVIL DESIGNS OF THE ANTI-NATION ELEMENTS" SEEKING TO DISRUPT THE ADMINISTRATION OF BANGLADESH.

3. IN A SPECIAL BID TO OVERCOME THE SENSE OF GRIEVANCE WHICH APPARENTLY CONTRIBUTED SO MATERIALLY TO THE SEPOY'S OUTBURST ON NOVEMBER 7, ZIA TOLD HIS "COLLEAGUES IN THE ARMED FORCES" THAT THEIR PRIMARY TASK IS TO LOOK AFTER THE "WELFARE AND INTERESTS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES..." ALL FELT, HE SAID "...FRUSTRATION AS A RESULT OF NEGLECT METED OUT TO THEM BY THE GOVERNMENT RULING THE COUNTRY SINCE LIBERATION", AND HE PROMISED EFFORTS TO RECTIFY THE NEGLECT.

4. ZIA'S SPEECH WAS PART OF THE CAMPAIGN TO REGAIN CONTROL OVER THE MILITARY. AN APPEAL INVOLVING OTHER REPORTEDLY WAS PLANNED ORIGINALLY BUT AGREEMENT AS TO ITS CHARACTER AND CONTENT MAY HAVE MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE. LAST NIGHT'S BRIEF ADDRESS BY ZIA PLACES THE FULL BURDEN FOR RESTORING DISCIPLINE ON THE ARMY CHIEF BUT ALSO UNDERSCORES THE FACT THAT, TITLES NOTWITHSTANDING, HE IS -- AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT -- THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS PERSON IN BANGLADESH.

5. ZIA'S EFFORTS INCLUDE MEASURES INTENDED TO RESOTRE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE. CONVOYS WERE OUT IN THE CITY TODAY, SERVING TO REMIND THE CITIZENRY THAT THE MILITARY IS THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY. HOWEVER, RESTORATION OF DISCIPLINE IS STILL IN PROCESS. WE ARE TOLD THAT ZIA FLEW RANGPUR YESTERDAY TO ADDRESS THE BRIGADE THERE, AND THAT HE MAY TRAVEL TO COMILLA AND MYMENSIGH TODAY. WHILE WE HAVE NO RPT NO HARD REPORTS OF TROUBLES IN THOSE PLACES, THERE IS A TRICKLE OF STORIES FROM DINAJPUR, SAIDPUR AND KHULNA THAT THEY WERE THE SCENES OF ROWDYISM BY SOLDIERS ON NOVEMBER 7. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD -- BUT NOT CONFIRMED -- THAT OFFICERS IN RANGPUR AND SAIDPUR FLED. UNTIL WE HEAR SOMETHING MORE, HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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WE ARE TREATING THESE STORIES WITH RESERVE.

6. ZIA'S ADDRESS AND HIS TRAVELS DEMONSTRATE THAT RESTORATION OF DISCIPLINE AMONG THE SEPOY REMAINS THE CHIEF TASK OF THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION. SUCH A RESTORATION OF DISCIPLINE IS NEEDED NOT SIMPLY TO RESTORE SOME MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS TO THE ARMED FORCES BUT, EQUALLY IMPORTANT, TO ALLAY THE PANIC WHICH "SEPOY MUNIY" HAS SPREAD AMONG THE BANGALESE

MOST ESPECIALLY THE MIDDLE CLASS. THIS LATTER GROUP, PERHPAS
ALWAYS FEARFUL THAT THE WORST IS ABOUT TO OCCUR, WERE THOROUGHLY
DEMORALIZED BY THE EVENTS OF 1971, BY THE RULE OF SHEIKH MUJIB,
AND BY THE COUPS OF AUGUST 15 AND NOVEMBER 3. THE "SEPOY MUNITY"
HAS SIMPLY DEEPENDED THEIR FUNK. SINCE THE MIDDLE CLASS MANS THE
GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS, UNTIL THEY REGAIN THE CONFIDENCE, HOPE
FOR PROGRESS SEEMS LIMITED.
BOSTER

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